REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 16-21 remain pending in this application. Of these claims 2, 3 and 17-20 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claim 21 is cancelled herein. Claims 4-15 were previously cancelled. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the structural limitation of cancelled claim 21 and, therefore, is in fact claim 21 rewritten in independent form. Therefore, it is manifest that the amendment does not raise any new issue and should be entered as placing the application in condition for allowance or, at the least, in better condition for appeal. A minor obvious typographical error in the specification has been corrected.

The optical fiber tape core of the present invention has plural optical fiber cores two-dimensionally arranged in parallel with each other, they do not intersect at any position, each of the plural optical fiber cores is completely affixed to the coating layer and the coating layer of silicone rubber is arranged on one side of the optical fiber tape core. It is unexpected that even though the coating layer is arranged on only one side of the optical fiber tape core assembly, the strength, flexibility and anti-curling properties are improved or maintained while avoiding the additional cost of the materials and manufacturing which would be required if constructing an optical fiber tape core having the coating layer completely surrounding the optical fibers.

In contrast, in Botelho, as shown in Figure 1 of Botelho, the coating layer covers the entire circumference of the optical fibers.

In fact, Botelho could not realize an optical fiber tape core assembly with the coating layer not completely surrounding the optical fibers. Botelho generally teaches a two-layer construction for a fiber tape core, in contrast to the present invention. Botelho only discloses one embodiment with a single coating layer and in that case the coating layer is formed from the melding of the coating layers surrounding the individual fiber tape cores. Botelho's process for making optical fiber tape cores cannot make an optical fiber tape core assembly with the coating layer on one side. Therefore Botelho does not anticipate the optical fiber tape core as recited in claim 1.

Because claim 16 recites a process for fabricating the optical fiber tape core of claim 1, which optical fiber tape core is not anticipated by Botelho, the process of claim 16 is similarly not anticipated by Botelho. Moreover, the process disclosed in Botelho differs from the process claimed in this application in at least two ways. First, Botelho does not disclose applying silicone rubber onto a two dimensional flat surface with plural optical fiber cores mounted therein. According to Botelho, when the same substance is used for both a primary and "ribbon matrix" layer, the coating is applied in a *two* step process of applying the primary layer to the *individual* fibers and then a solvent is applied to the coating which

causes the separate fibers to adhere to each other. *See* Botelho Col. 10 Lines 19-23. In contrast, as recited in claim 16, the coating is applied to all the optical fibers at the same time.

Second, Botelho does not disclose a peeling step in the process of fabricating optical fiber tape cores. The peeling step recited in claim 16 is not the stripping method disclosed in Botelho. The stripping method illustrated in Botelho is designed to completely expose an end portion of the fiber cores in the optical fiber ribbon by "substantially removing the ribbon matrix material, the primary polymeric coating material ... " *See* Botelho Col. 5 Lines 3-8. It is intended to totally denude the fiber of any coating aside from the fiber's own cladding layer and a very thin residual layer of the primary coating. As can be seen from Figures 9, 10, 11, 14 & 15 in the present application, which illustrate the peeling step, the ends of the optical fibers may already be exposed. The peeling step is to peel optical fibers coated *with a layer of the material* away from the coating material which is not coating the optical fiber and therefore remains on the two-dimensional flat surface upon which the optical fiber tape core is supported in the fabricating process. Therefore it is clear that Botelho does not teach the process recited in claim 16.

In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

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The USPTO is hereby authorized to charge any fee(s) or fee(s) deficiency or credit any excess payment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

Respectfully submitted,

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